In case of accounts that have remained inoperative for one year, banks are required to advise their customers. In case the advice letter is returned undelivered, the branch is expected to enquire into the whereabouts of such customers, or about their legal heirs.

Loan Facilities to Weaker Sections for Higher Education

2328. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the need for extending the access to higher education for economically weaker sections of society, Governments and the Nationalised Banks have decided to extend loan facilities to such sections at low rates of interest;

(b) if so, the details of the decision; and

(c) the steps since taken to make such loans available to genunie seekers of higher education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUAMR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The interest rates on advances are deregulated and banks are free to fix the rate of interest themselves with the approval of their Boards. Banks have been advised to fix their Behch-mark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) after taking into account cost of funds, transactions cost, risk factor margin and other overhead expenses. As per the Model Education Loan Scheme, 2004, the banks are to charge interest on education loan up to Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR and above Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR + 1 per cent. Further, the Education Loan Scheme aims at providing financial support from banking system to deserving/meritorious students for pursuing higher education in India and abroad. The scheme provides broad guidelines to the banks for operationalising the scheme and the implementing banks have the discretion to make changes suiting to the convenience of the students/ parents to make the scheme more customer friendly.

Correlation of Stock Markets with Global Stock Markets

2329. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are making a deliberate effort to correlate Indian stock markets with global stock markets;